

explosion of a canister of gunpowder will not. Between moral forces also, and the objects to which they are to be applied, there are constituted measures of proportion ; and it would seem an obvious principle of good sense, that an estimate moderately correct of the value of each of our means according to those measures, as far as they can be ascertained, should precede every application of them. Such an estimate has no place in a mind under the ascendancy of imagination, which, therefore, by extravagantly magnifying the virtue of its means, inflates its projects with hopes which may justly be called romantic. The best corrective of such irrational expectation is an appeal to experience. There is an immense record of experiments, which will assign the force of almost all the engines, as worked by human hands, in the whole moral magazine. And if a man expects any one of them to produce a greater effect than ever before, it must be because the talents of him that repeats the trial are believed to transcend those of all former experimenters, or else because the season appears more auspicious.

The estimate of the power of means, which comes in answer to the appeal to experience, is indeed most humiliating ; but what then ? It is an humble thing to be a man. The feebleness of means is, in fact, the feebleness of him that employs them; for instruments to all human apprehension the most inconsiderable, can produce the most prodigious effects when wielded by celestial powers. Till, then, the time shall arrive for us to attain a nobler rank of existence, we must be content to work on the present level of our nature, and effect that little which we can effect; unless it be greater magnanimity and piety to resolve that because our powers are limited to do only little things, they shall therefore, as if in revenge for such an economy, do nothing. Our means will do something; that something is what they were meant to be adequate *to* in our hands, and not some indefinitely greater effect, which we may all be tempted to wish, and which a sanguine visionary confidently expects.

This disproportion between the powers and means with which mortals are confined to work, and the great objects which good men would desire to accomplish, is a part of the appointments of Him who determined all the relations